

VZCZCXRO9356
PP RUEHDBU
DE RUEHBUL #5499/01 3190919
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 150919Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4102
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3337

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 005499

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STATE FOR SCA/FO (DAS GASTRIGHT), SCA/A, S/CRS, S/CT,
EUR/RPM STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG, NSC
FOR AHARRIMAN, OSD FOR KIMMETT, CENTCOM FOR CFC-A, CG
CJTF-76, POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2016

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SUBJECT: STABILITY AT STAKE IN ZABUL: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES
AUXILARY POLICE, SECURITY ISSUES

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald Neumann, for reasons 1.4 (B), (D).

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Ambassador and Embassy officers visited the Romanian Forward Operating Base (FOB) and the U.S. run Qalat Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Zabul province November 6, where they attended security briefings on Taliban activity and redeployment of artillery assets as well as a graduation ceremony for 51 Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP) recruits. (Note: 55 ANAP recruits were supposed to graduate. However, on the day of the graduation, three were killed and one critically wounded in a fire fight. End note.) Many of the recruits complained of the lack of payment. In a separate meeting with the Ambassador, several INL contracted trainers suggested the ANAP curriculum needs modification to include more time for police tactical and firearms instruction, arguing curriculum modification was critical if the ANAP is going to be an effective force against insurgents. Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) is addressing the payment problem with the Ministry of Interior and promises action by next payday, November 15. CSTC-A's training division is also addressing the curriculum issue. Provincial Governor Arman addressed the need to pay ANAP recruits faster and said nonpayment hurt recruitment and aided the insurgents. Arman also requested more reconstruction projects from the PRT. END SUMMARY

ZABUL: SECURITY AND POLITICAL ASSESSMENT

12. (C/NF) Addressing security, Commanding Officer of the Romanian maneuver unit Lieutenant Colonel Petrescu acknowledged there is less stability in Zabul province than last year. Petrescu said Romanian forces are working with Afghan National Army (ANA) kandaks (battalion) to secure Highway One, the single hard-surface road connecting the province to northern and southern Afghanistan. He cited increased insurgent activities, including an improvised explosive device (IED) making cell operating out of western districts of the province. Petrescu noted that U.S. Special Forces groups units are working with ANA and Romanian

companies to pacify the area. He also identified the presence of two Taliban cells in Mizan district responsible for recent ambushes. He acknowledged security in the districts could be improved but stated that his priority is securing Highway One as well as the southern districts bordering Pakistan. Petrescu added that ISAF is redeploying 120 mm mortar support and other light artillery out of the province. He has requested additional HMMWVs from ISAF to provide better mobility throughout the province for his units. However, he complimented the quality of air support from Kandahar Air Field (KAF). (NOTE: U.S. Special Forces Task Force 31 (TF-31) noted the Romanians did not operate extensively outside of Highway One but offered praise of their efforts to secure the highway. They also indicated that more Afghan locals are fighting against coalition forces than previously. They attributed this to both unemployment and the infiltration of Taliban and Al Qaeda elements into villages. END NOTE)

13. (C) Petrescu said the Afghan National Police (ANP) units in Zabul need better training as they are at least three to four years behind the ANA in capability. He claimed Zabul's Provincial Governor Arman has grossly exaggerated the number of ANP units on duty in Zabul, while noting that the accurate number of ANP forces in the province is currently unknown. Arman is reportedly claiming to the MOI in Kabul that the ANP has over 100 checkpoints throughout Zabul, but Petrescu said the number of checkpoints was probably under 70. (Note: in an effort to obtain ground truth on the number of ANP in Zabul, the GOA Policy Action Group (PAG) and Security Operations Group directed an audit of the ANSF forces there. This audit has recently been completed and the results are being compiled at this time. Embassy will report septel as information becomes available. End note.)

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14. (C) TF-31 suggested a fundamental change is needed for ANP training to include a greater emphasis on counterinsurgency and heavy weapons training. Additionally, both ANA and ANP need mortar training so they can deliver their own fire power without relying solely on coalition forces. (Comment: International donors might view the equipping of the ANP with mortars as a step towards excessive militarization of the police, but it is essential to protect them from the threat they face. The Ministry of Interior has stated that tsecurity forces (specifically the ANP) need stronger support

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to counter the lethality of the insurgent forces. Frequently the ANP are attacked with larger caliber weapons, which places the ANP at a disadvantage. The current equipment fielding plan for the ANP addresses this disparity by issuing assault rifles, heavy and light machine guns and Rocket Propelled Grenade Launchers but does not include any plan to field mortars. This equipment plan was briefed on November 11 to the international community (including the German Police Ambassador, UNAMA, EU, NATO SCR, ISAF, and British, Canadian, and Dutch Embassies) and no one raised any objection. End comment.

15. (C/NATO) PRTOffs briefed the Ambassador on Zabul's political situation. The PRT officers said Governor Arman is doing a good job, compared to other provincial governors, but he needed better transparency in his administration. Accusations of corruption surround Arman. He is purported to have taken money from his subordinates for their positions as well as shifting administrative and ANP district chiefs around the province. His use of the Governor's Operation Fund is also unclear. Additionally, Arman needs to delegate more authority to his subordinates. The PRT team said that while there are currently 44 ongoing reconstruction projects in Zabul, there is untapped funding available from the Ministry of Finance for more projects but Arman has not taken advantage of this. (Comment: The national-level inability to move money from the ministries to provinces is hindering

reconstruction in all provinces, not just Zabul. End comment.) PRToffs also cited the need for additional civilian advisors in provincial ministries.

ANAP: DELAYED SALARIES IMPEDE RECRUITMENT, TRAINING ADJUSTMENT NEEDED

¶16. (SBU) Provincial officials held a graduation ceremony for 51 ANAP recruits in the second ANAP training class and the Ambassador delivered remarks thanking them for their willingness to serve their country. According to the INL contracted instructors, the recruits had participated in a firefight the previous night against a Taliban attack on an isolated ANAP checkpoint; three recruits were killed and one critically wounded. The recruits heard word of the attack and willingly went in to join the fight to protect their comrades. Following the ceremony, the Ambassador had a candid conversation with some of the recruits. Their main complaint was the lack of payment of salaries. According to the recruits, the provincial officials promised payment but alleged administrative processes had held it up. One recruit said the lack of payment hurt morale and more than 22 recruits quit the ANAP. Rumors were also spreading through Zabul that the officials were pocketing the ANAP salaries. Another recruit expressed concern over the officials' lack of concern for the welfare of the families of two classmates killed during an ambush. One recruit noted that several recruit family members had been threatened, causing additional dropouts.

¶17. (SBU) Note: Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan confirmed that the first pay distribution for ANAP will be November 15, in accordance with the normal pay period for the ANP nationwide. This is part of a pay reform

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activity that is being phased in gradually (see septel). Many of the recruits are former Afghan Highway Police and other non-registered hires who are expecting four months backpay that is not covered under the ANAP terms of reference. Nonetheless, the perception of non-payment could undermine the ANAP initiative; A/DCM raised this issue in the November 8 Policy Action Group (PAG) and urged the MoI to ensure that all police are paid on time (septel). End note.

GOVERNOR ARMAN: PROMISES ANAP RECRUITMENT, WANTS MORE USAID PROJECTS

¶18. (C) During a meeting with the Ambassador, Governor Arman pledged to increase ANAP recruitment all across the province. He cited the need to explain to the people the added security a trained ANAP force would bring to the province. Arman strongly stressed the need to pay recruits on time. He also wanted to increase coordination between ANA and ANAP units in Zabul, and requested additional reconstruction projects for his province. According to the governor, PRT projects are successful in Zabul because the PRT can provide security for the sites the ANSF is currently unable to provide. He noted the provincial security situation is declining with ANAP personnel receiving 'night letters' warning them to quit.

¶19. (C) Arman proposed the idea of a tribal jirga in Zabul between the ulema and tribal elders to "help settle tensions." He added, he would like to do this independently and without involvement from Kabul.

¶110. (C) The governor also pledged to do more in Zabul on poppy eradication in the upcoming year and cited the November 5 destruction of 400 metric tons of opium during a recent narcotics bust in Zabul.

COMMENT

¶11. (SBU) Zabul was the first province in which the ANAP concept has been implemented. It was chosen because it has a strong provincial governor, ANA presence, and support from

the U.S. PRT. The complaints and concerns of both recruits and trainers highlight how complicated the program is, and how it is affected by long standing problems with the police (such as non-payment of salaries) and the difficult security environment. The MoI, with international assistance, is gradually developing ways to address these concerns. UNAMA has agreed to contribute its political expertise to help recruit ANAP who reflect the ethnic and tribal balance of local districts. We are increasingly confident that we can generate sufficient numbers of auxiliary police. 251 patrolmen have graduated to date from the 10-day program in Zabul and Kandahar and hundreds more are in the training pipeline in the six southern provinces. We are now shifting our focus to assuring quality: we want to establish quality control over the ANAP, not just while they are in training, but extending out to their performance in the field.

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